



October 2004

Dear Mine Operator:

We are all proud of the fact that the mining industry has achieved three record-low years for fatalities and injuries. However, we also feel that too many miners are still injured or killed on the job. Even one is too many. We can get to zero fatalities, and reduce serious injuries as well as occupational illness if we concentrate on safe and healthful operating procedures and pay attention to our work.

To help focus the industry's attention on getting fatalities and injuries down to zero, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) is announcing an End of Summer Safety Stand Down. This Stand Down will kick off a national risk assessment initiative that will introduce a simple risk management technique: Stop, Look, Analyze and Manage – SLAM – risk in the workplace. The SLAM initiative is a long-term effort to further reduce mining accidents and send more safe and healthy miners home to their families each day.

I would ask you, as a leader in the mining industry, to join the SLAM initiative by conducting a stand down – a short safety meeting – to discuss this initiative and inform and educate your employees and contractors on the critical importance of conducting regular and timely risk assessments in their everyday tasks.

Enclosed with this letter is a packet of materials for you to share with the miners and contractors who work in your operations. This packet includes posters, pocket cards, and a brief discussion outline you can use in talking to your employees about the necessity of conducting risk assessments prior to beginning a task.

I appreciate the time you're taking to read this message – and the time you will take to meet with your employees to remind them of the key role risk assessment plays in keeping their workplace safer and sending them home safe and healthy at the end of every shift. Your active participation in this initiative is crucial to its success.

Together, we can continue the momentum the mining industry has achieved toward zero injuries, zero fatalities and an end to occupational illness. MSHA can't do it alone – we need the help of everyone in mining to make our vision – our vision of zero – a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave D. Lauriski".

Dave D. Lauriski  
Assistant Secretary of Labor for  
Mine Safety and Health